6/30/72

Dear Howard,

Lil and I have DC medical appointments at 2. It was after 11 when I got the mail. I found in it Jerry's letter, which Jim had told me to expect and I had a hunch, knowing him that he would write more or less as he has. I read and replied to it immediately. I have skimmed your letters of the 27th and 29th. Lil has read all three. But it is now almost 12:30 and we have to leave in less than a half hour, and in that time we have to eat and dress. I write this generality only in the event I get to see Bud in DC, as we are tentatively scheduled to do, and don't have time in the a.m. to add to it before I mail it. Were I to mail it now it wouldn't reach you tomorrow anyway, and I'm sorry I can't afford to phone.

Some of your criticisms are legitimate. Some are out of context. Some of your arguments are valid. I have no really serious complaint about your 27. I am concerned about what has happened to Sylvia. I think you now realize I have been hinting at this for some time. She has and has had deep emotional problems and she is now confronted with what I think her mind will not let her face, what is a-typical for her, her long-time dishonesty and her rationalizations. I don't know how you or I can help her. If I could I would. Even now.

About yourself: First, none of this is your fault, so don't feel overburdened or in any sense responsible. Don't work yourself into any kind of state. It is outside your control and always was. The only question you ever faced was whether or not you'd be part of it and neither way would you have had any significant effect on whatever would or would not result. The only concern I had was your subsequent self-regard. That is now academic. Even if Wecht decides not to go in, Marshall will have another, so don't worry. You could exert no major influence.

However, there is a chance you can worry about this and perhaps about us more than you should. You are exceptionally mature for your years, but you have no more life experience than your actual years. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to counsel with your father, as you seem to have in at least one instance, for he has the experience with people if he knows little about the subject.

Most of all, don't fret and don't let this get to you.

Spilt milk if for cats. You don't meow.

Really sincerely,

Later. We are back before supper because Bud got tied up. I'll be interrupted if not earlier then for supper, so I begin with a few generalities that occurred to me while driving. I hope that whether or not you consider them relevant, you will consider them.

First, I want you to make a temporary detachment from the immediate problem. It can and will grow on you, it will become a problem when it need not, and you will lose perspective. More, you'll get hungup, and you should not, not in any way or any legitimate reason.

As a starter read the Book of Ecclesiastes. What most people never come to understand about me is that I am more than the product of some many generations over the ages, I am largely true to that cultural background. I have a very strong sense of what is right, and wrong. While I haven't read the Old Testament in years, like JFK, this is my favorite book. I want you to read this for the philosophy, not the religion. Afterward, if you do not dope out some of the figures of speech (Keeprs of the house), I'll do it for you. And paying attention to something else as this juncture should give you a respite I think your mind needs. But I believe thinking about this philosophy at this time can be constructive. If you are not familiar with that book, you have a joy ahead, a real delight in its beauty. Then, for a change of pace and another perspective, go to the book of Joshua and, at the very least, read chapter 2. There you will find that when Dan'l fit the Battle of Jericho the walls did not tumble down all by themselves. Nor did they because of the circumferential marching and trumpet (ram's horn) blowing. A whore helped much. She is good guys. Understand this in its full import.

You mention my writing. And I am very much involved in this. So, perhaps it would be a good lead if you were to reread the Epilogue to WWII. If you father hasn't and he has time, maybe he'd enjoy it. It will tell you something about me and my beliefs, about my philosophy. And you may find that there is, as Ecclestiastes, little new under the sun. In this area, of course. If you want to carry this further, a short thing that can limn much of this and tell you more about me would be to now reread the foreword to PW. Among other things you will learn more about me and Garrison, for suddenly it will become clear to you what I put up with and why, I think; and where he got the first part of Heritage.

After this or as much as you may do, in this order, if you still feel too heavily burden, forget about everything for a while. Go out someplace where your mind won't be free to dwell on it, try and find something worth spending the time on in the tube, or read something you've been intending to for a while and just haven't.

It is important that you not be overwhelmed by the situation, your conscience, me, anyone else, or any kind of worry. What I wrote earlier of your role and your capability is true. You cannot exert any major influence on these events, you have done nothing wrong of which I know, if you did, you did not intend wrong, so there is on this score no need for qualms, and you have done nothing to hurt anyone or the situation.

One of the realities of life, never pleasant even when realized, is that there are some futilities with which one just cannot deal. It is essential to one's stability to be able to both recognize and accept this. We cannot anticipate what can or will happen, we can only estimate. Thus I never said that what I feared was a certainty. At the beginning, I actually wondered if the feds would be sophisticated enough to see it. My simplified thinking as of that time was that there being no chance for any really constrictive good to come from this, it was stupidity to run the risk. That simple. You are in just this situation. There is a futility. There really is nothing you can do except worry yourself into a state for nothing, absolutely nothing. And on the other hand, if and when there is a major development, if you don't preserve your balance and perspective, you may be incapicated at a time when it might be better if you were 100%.

So, tell yourself what is true: this is the way it is, you have done what to this point you can, this is the way that for the time being it has to be, and until something does or does not happen, you'll concern yourself with what can make constructive use of your time. I suggest fun. I am not saying don't be aware, for I mean the opposite. I am not saying don't make a record, for it is important that you do. I am saying that you a) ought not be getting torn up and b) ought not at this juncture be taking any initiatives or assuming any responsibilities not really yours. If you doubt the wisdom, talk it over with your dad. These are generalities and they do not require of him specific knowledge he does not have or you cannot easily give him.

Lil has put supper in the oven and gone into the pool for a dip. I will join her, for her and for the little relaxation it will give me. First I must confess two misjudgements, one of reaction, the other of timing. Of course, I didn't expect Gary and Jerry to do as they have, least of all without talking to me and most of all with what they know of the Ned deal. I didn't begin to think you would be ganged up on as you have been. Perhaps, knowing the others as I think I do and understandinging their lusts and ambitions as I think I have come to, I should have seen that this was inevitable. Not for your knowledge but for your involvement, your complicity, your sharing of guilt if something went wrong, in their minds. I underestimated the extent to which they, I am reasonably certain in all but one case without awareness, became the creatures of their desires, of which I am also certain, there was sunconscious awareness where it was not conscious. I owe you an apology, for with my exoerience, I should have anticipated this and been more of a buffer instead of really contributing to it by seeking to prepare you to face yourself. I did expect a crisis in Sylvia, but I did not expect it at this point. I expected it if the evil I consider likely comes to pass. If when I resume I do not go into her not opening the letter, think of it yourself or remind me. No, I'll open it now. Why should she go to pieces on seeing an envelope from me? How did she know, for example, that I wasn't sening her a copy of some goodie? She had done all she could to see that I had no awareness of what was going on, as had all the others, Gary, Jerry and Cyril for sure. Jerry was even here after this dastardly thing (note I did not remind him of this in the letter enclosed). I am suggesting, suggesting strongly, that her conscience, which had been gnawing away, got to her. Sylvia is not a dishonest person. She is emptional and can't control her emotions.

They control her mind with respect to me (from before Garrison) and Garrison, I am certain, and with respect to the tragedy of delay in printing her book I am pretty certain. This may, in fact, be a kind of clue. You will find, for example, in my correspondence file an incredible letter from her saying anything worhtwhile can today be printed without problems and that she had no problem getting her book printed. Both are, were and to her knowledge were lies.

The short dip in the pool felt good. In a few minutes I'm taking the advice I gave you and I'm looking at the "news". Two things occurred to me while in the pool, and both may figure in this, esp. if SM read the letter as I think you report she says she didn't. Have you any idea what, collectively, we could have produced if there could have been unselfishness, if instead of having to squander so much time on so many self-seekers and fame seekers and frivolities, which is what, in retrospect, Jerry amounts to, I could have devoted myself only to research and writing, with the kind of help many others could have provided, at no pain to them?

Knowing Sylvia's towering intellect, and you know this statement is not a rhetorical device, can she have been more anti-intellectual than in not exploring the possibilities of counter-productivity in this mess? It can't be because of her pretense that she can't engage in a dilaogue with me. If she could try it with Belin, is there anything impossible?

Or, if all the chickens come home to roost at one time, how much can a single roost hold?

Later. I've got 10-15 minutes, so let me begin with your 6/27. In addition to what I've said there are some areas where there may be dispute where both could be right, there being areas of legitimate disagreement where opinion is the issue. Before looking at it, and I won't address all of it, and I don't think you intended for me to, let me come to the question of writing. Here many fac ors are involved, includes questions of taste. You, for example, like you hair long. I doubt you know anyone with any hair who wears his shorter than I. If you think I am unaware of legitimate criticism of my writing, when you are here again go through my correspondence with the editor of Steppenwolf, a poetry quarterly, see my self-criticism and evaluate his response, the summary-~~paraphrase~~ paraphrase of which is he'd never seen as complete and honest a self-criticism. You have to consider more things than you do, than you seem to be aware of. Sure there are legitimate criticisms of my writing. The rest can await a leisurely, philosophical discussion. And by the way, when you look into this, you might also read my correspondence with a Tulane lit prof (also a fink) named John Joerg (right) and his subsequent review of my work.

At this point there is no hing to be gained by discussing the over-simplification represented as Sylvia's attitude on Garrison. She is sufficiently sophisticated to understand a conspiracy indictment as you probably are not, and for all his many shortcomings, Garrison never charged that either Shaw or Oswald killed the President. He charged, rightly or wrongly, that there was such a plot and that a single overt step was taken in furtherance of the plot, that having to do with the rifle. The ruin of Shaws life, if it is a fact, had nothing to do with his being a fag, something about which Garrison could not have been more scrupulous. When he could have made a big deal out of what was taken in a search under a warrant, he made no comment, and if at a later date some reporter had ~~not radiant~~ realized that what is seized has to be reported and that it is a public record, there would have been no reporting of it. If you want to know the kind of prejudicial information of this nature could have been released, ask me sometimes in person. SM has no way of knowing whether or not Shaw was innocent of anything at all and if she really knew the WR material, had continued in any meaningful way her alleged desire to exonerate Oswald, which has recently been represented as her representation of her interest, she'd know that at the very least Shaw lied under oath and I have little doubt that it is perjury from my own subsequent investigations of which Garrison has neither knowledge nor copies. This was her emotion, not her mind, and she refused to hear anything, as I'm sure I've already recounted. Strangely enough, for one of her protentations, I have yet to hear a legitimate one to the effect that Garrison never conducted an Oswald investigation in N.O. or anywhere and you know this was not my talking interest at a later date when it could serve a purpose but my actual one almost to the exclusion of everything else. With this consuming dedication of hers and knowing how much work I was doing in N.O., SM never asked what I learned of NO and possible associates and refused to listen to anything about his only accuser, the man to whom she gave money. Were you in my position, would you, on this simplistic basis alone, have questions about her sincerity, then or in the current representation?

There are many legitimate complaints that can be made against Garrison. SM's were based on emotion, not fact. Neither she nor the Frankenstein she helped create ever really stated the case that can be made. And do I have to tell you who, on the personal level, has legitimate complaint? What we have here is another case of the emotions dominating the mind. Avoiding this is never simple, but if we have to take the two extremes here, her's and mine, I am confident what rational appraisal by any who might be dispassionate would show.

No point in belaboring current Wecht situation or "exclusivity", which is not a correct formulation.

If I seemed to be "exasperated" at your not arguing with her on every point, I don't think I was and if I was I would have been wrong. But on "opportunity to let the truth out" you should have made comment I don't recall your indicating you did. If at another point you discussed this in another way that was, I think, inadequate for a real dialogue, any effort to make her think. Perhaps this was impossible. I know the eloquence of which she is capable without even trying and the torrent in which the words can come.

On page 3, this is a contradictory representation of Cyril's feelings about the CTIA than was earlier represented, but I may be confusing this and SM's earlier attitude on this. I know he likes Bud personally and although he seems to have denied it and it is possible that the operation was independent, I also know that coinciding with Cyril's letting everyone but me know that he would apply, Bob started an incompetent rushed study of the medical evidence that I don t think he yet begins to understand. He was explicit: to help Cyril. He told me this, pefsonally, and I refused to help him. This roughly coincides with my discussion with Lesar in which I asked him to answer questions instead of making statements to him.

Heck fragments: does he need to know more than Lattimer said? Or he knows from that of my work he has read? You have seen his written thanks.

Lil dozed off so I can continue. I'll be as brief as I can with your 6/29 and I'll ignore most it it for you need no amplification on most.

Jerry may not have called you until the a.m. of the 29th, but he spoke to Lesar a day earlier and I know this thing was off, as I think I told you, the afternoon before JP called you. I find myself wonder why if you are the alleged key, the quintessential one.

I realize this is a quote of a quote so there may be infidelity, so I use your words and you can make any allowances you consider necessary: Sylvia, "...we have all worked so long for this and now it is ruined." Let's take this parat. What is it that "we" have "worked" for so long? Wecht to see the film? Pinning a bum rap on the Kennedys? Exculpating Hoover, the FBI and assorted other crooked ones like Specter? I don't have to tell you how little prospect there was of Wecht's learning anything new or how little prospect there was of his detecting fakes (I am not assuming fakes) if they were made. There is no chance of a man with his all-consuming ignorance as you later reflect being able to detect even a second rate job by a pro. If it is truth, I can sapre you a few suggestions about how SM, W and others could have spared themselves so much hard work they did on this. On the medical evidence it totals absolute zero. If it is establishment of truth, from the time she finished her book, with SM it is absolute zero. Roughly, from the time she finished her book the only ones to do any kind of real work are Dick, Hoch, youmx and I. Did you or Dick appoint her spokesman. I know Hoch didn't. She says he is a government agent. My voice has been heard before on this. So what is being talked about through the tears? Is the "this" something unconscious about me? If I do not allege it or thing it is probable, with the record I can't reject it entirely, either. I see at best irrationality and self-exposure in these words if they are at all faithful.

There is an element of mysterty for me here as it relates to you for it seems that you should have been consulted beginning Monday, not Thursday a.m.

And over and above everything else, how was anything ruined by anything you report as having been told you? If Wecht sees this film and he never heard of any of us, how is anything "ruined"? If he knows only the conclusions of the Comission he knows all he need know. And if he knows his business he doesn't even have to know that. He goes in, sees the stuff, comes out and says this is what it shows. What else is needed? What is this absolute ruin jazz except self denunciation of all those involved in this ploy and how much closer can anyone get to justifying what I've said from long before I knew CW was going to ask and from the moment I learned he had decided to, to everyone with whom I am in touch?

So poor, abused, picked on, discriminated-against Cyril is "'pissed off' at everybody." Dear Howard, you have a tender soul. Please shed a tear with me. He is pissed off at everybody because he doubts his own competence, eyt he rush in where even a fool would know not to tread, if the fool be an honest fool. He ain't pissed off at me because all he has done is pick my brains in return for nothing and he hasn't asked me any questions or responded to any challenge or, indeed, been willing to blow the whole thing apart or even ask how. So it ain't "everybody" now, is it? And this so long after he has the death certificate? I think we have been niggardly, and you know I don't include myself in the "we". We assumed that for his eminence a silver platter, sterling, that is, would suit. Wrong. Only glod, and then if platinum isn't available. I guess "we" all lack proper respect for the eminence who wouldn't even read a book to help himself. He says he has to now, does he not?

And where do you get off saying such a man such "humiliate" himself by calling you? Especially when he can call you free, your Penna taxpayers thoughtfully paying his phone bill.

On lifton there is one thing I know I told Jerry, but I think you should consider reminding him about. Lifton is really insane and with it unscrupulous. Jerry has to be insane to consider Lifton over, say, Gary even if he didn't know of Lifton illness, which he did. I know I told and warned him, and I'm sure Sylvia did. She has a real hate on him now that it is too late. And I know I must have told him more than once about the Liebeler connection.

On the second page I see you have begun to understand what I wish you had earlier. It would have made no difference to anyone but you and that is why I wish it. You'd have been saved needless pain.

I see that Jerry, too, is now "ruined", and "forever". For what work? Crookedness he knew was crookedness but kidded himself into believing was required by what he calls "good conscience"? On a personal level there is but one for whom this can hold any hurt. There is no mention of that one by any of these so concerned with ruin.

His letter to me is one with which I'd prefer that you be exceedingly careful if you feel you must discuss it with him. In your interest I recommend against it. Get off this level or you'll run yourself up the wall and soon your family, In my interest I ask you to make no comment on any single thing she says in it. You are sharp enough to see the need for this on your own. If he wants to expand on it if you find it inadequate, maybe that is okay. Let him tlak; don't you. My letter addresses enoughof these point. Perhaps you could stick to that? My concern here is dual my own interest and mobility in the event we have to do anything at any time. I see nothing constructive to come from dialogue.

If you are going to concern yourself with anything further on this, I suggest that it be first the end of this memo, the rest you didn't get down.

On Cyril there is one thing you say with which I entirely agree: you should not call him. You should not have been put in this position. He should have taken the initiative in seeking help and had in mind the help he needs, not have to be told what he has to know.

You conclude saying things are beginning to sink in. I anticipate more will. Don't be of faint heart. All it will really be will be disillusionment. That is never easy. But it is tolerable if your mind is open and free, and as you will learn with the years, it is one of the most beneficial experiences for later life, one of the things most conducive to maturity. I hope you can learn more from it than my record shows I have.

This is all painful to you now. But it is one of the most valuable experiences of your life, one of the most important parts of you informal education, the most important kind. The rest comes from books. Easy.

Relax. You can and I mean it. None of this makes any difference now except in possible hurt to me. It can go the other way and help. You have no guilt to feel or look for. As you must now realize, I have been making suggestions about Sh's emotional problems for some time, on your last trip past suggestions, and in letters pretty explicitly. None of us caused it. None of us could have avoided it without her willingness. If you recall my letters to her, I surely made enough gestures. I know that repeatedly I warned her. You couldn't and she would not listen. It is still another needless tragedy. I hope she snaps out of it. There is only one way, and it will be very hard: facing up to everything. Few of us ever can. I know I try but I do not know that I always succeed. Hate and jealously, further, are self-consuming emotions. I lost them years ago. Som chins up. The sun will shine tomorrow. Best,